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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Ruben Avelar of Garland, Texas, who passed away on April 17, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar was born on August 8, 1927, in El Paso, Texas; his parents were Vicente and Nicolasa Avelar; he married his second wife, Martha, in September of 1959, in El Paso, Texas; and

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WHEREAS, As a child, Ruben Avelar and his family worked as migrant farmers in California; he graduated from Bowie High School in El Paso, Texas in 1945; and

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WHEREAS, After high school, Ruben Avelar joined the United States Army after VE Day during the closing months of World War II; after the end of the war, he saw overseas duty in post-war Korea to help keep the peace; in 1950, he was recalled into the Army as a second lieutenant in anti-aircraft artillery and served stateside both in California and at Fort Bliss; and

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WHEREAS, After his Army service, Ruben Avelar attended Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso) and earned his bachelor's degree in economics; he later attended the University of Texas Law School; and

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1 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar began his professional career in 1952
2 as a labor economist with the Texas Employment Commission; in
3 1958, he began working for the United States Department of
4 Labor; drawing from his upbringing as a migrant worker, he
5 passionately learned about the U.S. Department of Labor and the
6 federal government's tracking and caring for the migrant
7 segment of the labor force; shortly after joining the
8 Department of Labor, he moved his family to West Memphis,
9 Arkansas; in 1962, he was hired by the San Francisco Regional
10 Office of the Department of Labor in the U.S. Employment
11 Service Division; after serving as the interim Regional
12 Administrator for the Dallas Regional Office of the Department
13 of Labor, he accepted a permanent position as the Deputy
14 Regional Administrator in Dallas, Texas; in August of 1972, he
15 and his family moved to Garland, Texas; and

16 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar was heavily involved in community
17 activism and service; while living in California, he helped
18 form the San Francisco Civic Center Forum, a group that helped
19 train local activists on the basics of tapping state and
20 federal resources for any conceivable community need; he sought
21 elective public office on the San Bruno City Council, as part
22 of a successful effort to prevent the construction of an
23 interstate highway through the San Bruno neighborhoods; later,
24 while living in Garland, Texas, he began working to help

1 educate residents about high electric rates, and in the
2 mid-1980s was appointed to the Utility Advisory Board by the
3 Garland City Council; after his retirement from the federal
4 government in 1988, he became an elected member of the Garland
5 City Council; as a member of the council, he was influential in
6 preventing high-stakes bingo from coming to Garland; in 1997,
7 he was asked by his neighbors to return to the Garland City
8 Council, and he won election to the District 4 seat of South
9 Garland in May of that year; he retired from the council after
10 serving 2 full terms; and

11 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar was a member of various local
12 organizations, including the Garland AARP, the Garland chapter
13 of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, and
14 the Dallas County Workforce Development Board; and

15 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar enjoyed travelling, fishing, and
16 photography; and

17 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar was preceded in death by his
18 daughter, Jacquelyn Celeste; and

19 WHEREAS, Ruben Avelar is survived by his wife of 52 years,
20 Martha; his sons, Andre' and Marc (Grace); his 2 grandchildren
21 and 3 great-grandchildren; and his niece, Cecilia Farley
22 (Bill); therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
3 his family and friends, the passing of Ruben Avelar; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Ruben Avelar as an expression of our
7 sympathy.